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## **Birthing Athena**

The Uncertain Future of  
European Security and Defense Policy

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**Christopher S. Chivvis**

*March 2008*



**Security Studies Center**



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# Contents

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<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The Significance of ESDP's Origins</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Three Models for ESDP</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>ESDP light</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Ares' ESDP</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Athena's ESDP</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Stabilizing Athena</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Coercive Athena</i>	<i>20</i>
<b>Building Athena: ESDP and Europe's Capabilities Foundation</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>ESDP and Transatlantic Relations</b>	<b>28</b>
<i>Why an EUOHQ is Premature</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>The Pressing Need to Fix EU-NATO Working Relationship</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Turkey, Cyprus and ESDP</i>	<i>33</i>
<b>Optimising Commission-Council Work</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>39</b>



# Introduction

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European Security and Defense Policy could become the most significant feature in the transatlantic landscape since the end of the Cold War. Where is it going? What are the challenges that lie ahead? What are the best strategies for meeting them?

Any consideration of the future of ESDP should begin with an honest assessment of what it is today. This means dismissing some misconceptions that have surrounded the project in the past. It is not a European defense or a European army. Rather, ESDP is best understood as a proven institutional capacity that allows European states to take collective action to conduct small-scale military and civilian operations around the world, if they choose, without help from NATO. To date it thus represents a positive but relatively minor development on the world stage.

But given time, effort, and propitious circumstances, ESDP could grow into something more significant for global security and world political order. It already has political and military significance insofar as it provides an alternative to NATO or the United Nations for small-scale crisis management or state building, at least in some circumstances. Its main political significance is no doubt that it could, one day, lead to a major intensification of European integration. More broadly, insofar as ESDP is autonomous – which, as discussed below, is at present only the case in very limited sense – it tends to increase the global political influence of the European Union and its member states. An increase in Europe's relative power vis-à-vis the United States is clearly significant for transatlantic relations. So far, however, ESDP operations have remained limited, in contrast to what some European officials sometimes suggest. The majority have been predominantly civilian in nature, a point that is sometimes elided when European officials discuss the number of EU missions that have taken place.<sup>1</sup> Of the 19 missions that have or will soon operate under an EU flag, only four have involved even a modest number of combat troops

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<sup>1</sup> See Bernard Kouchner, "Keeping the Peace", In: *International Herald Tribune*, March 10, 2008.

and these have been of very limited size and duration.<sup>2</sup> Of course, as discussed below, the distinction between “civilian” and “military” operations, is growing ever less clear, but this is a separate issue.

ESDP today is thus primarily a means for European states to coordinate their peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. ESDP missions have accordingly tended to be contributions to larger, ongoing efforts of the international community, not independent state-building missions in their own right. Of course, the first ESDP mission was only launched in 2003, and it is thus sometimes said that ESDP is only in its infancy.<sup>3</sup> This is true, but only in the sense that it is young, not because the infant is necessarily headed to adulthood. ESDP could just remain the minor project that it is today.

The next few years will be crucial to determining which direction ESDP goes. Some factors will favor further growth and development. First, the Lisbon “reform” treaty should soon be ratified, introducing important new innovations to the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and, more importantly, putting to rest the intra-EU quarrel that has impeded progress for the last five years.<sup>4</sup> Second, the divisions that arose over the Iraq War are fading, both between Europe and the United States and within Europe itself. This should facilitate a more reasoned discussion of Europe’s role in global security. Third, with the Iraq and Afghanistan wars continuing and a major presidential campaign underway, the United States has entered a period in which openness to independent European efforts is apt to increase, provided that these efforts are viewed as generally positive for the transatlantic relationship. Fourth, the French presidency of the EU, which begins in June, is very likely to attempt to push ESDP forward into a new phase.<sup>5</sup>

But not all factors point in a positive direction. To begin with, over the next year and a half, the EU will face a number of key challenges, in Chad, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and, crucially, in the Balkans where ESDP was born. These challenges might accelerate ESDP’s development, but they might also stunt its growth. Moreover, not all European political developments are positive. While France prepares a renewal of ESDP, other key European partners may be losing interest in the project. For example, although Germany is slowly overcoming its reluctance to send troops abroad, the future direction of German security policy remains a major unknown and Germany may have reached the limit of its tolerance

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<sup>2</sup> EU military operations as of 2008 include: Concordia in Macedonia; Artemis in the Democratic Republic of Congo; Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina; EUFOR RDC. (A fifth is planned for Chad). A complete list of ESDP operations since 2003 may be found at: [http://consilium.europa.eu/cms3\\_fo/showPage.asp?id=268&lang=en](http://consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=268&lang=en).

<sup>3</sup> Jolyon Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2007, p.3.

<sup>4</sup> See Javier Solana, interview with Laurent Zecchini, “L’approbation du traité européen modifié relancera la politique de sécurité”, In: *Le Monde*, October 13, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> See Laurent Zecchini, “La France veut profiter de sa présidence de l’UE pour relancer la défense européenne”, In: *Le Monde*, October 17, 2007.

for overseas military expeditions.<sup>6</sup> If this is true, Germany will push ESDP toward a smaller, more civilian role. At the same time, the new British government seems relatively disinclined toward security policy. ESDP without British cooperation is possible, but would have substantially less impact, militarily and politically. Meanwhile, Turkey's troubled relationship with the EU continues to create a whole other set of problems, as discussed below. Any attempt to push ESDP forward in a meaningful way in the near future will thus not be easy.

ESDP's future therefore remains uncertain. Moving forward will require addressing at least three major issues. This note examines each in turn.

- First, it looks at possible future models for ESDP, assessing the military capabilities these would require, and examining strategies for realizing them.
- Second, it turns to a set of specific issues related to getting the EU-NATO relationship right.
- Third, it looks at ways in which the European Commission could be used to bolster ESDP missions.

Before examining these three subjects, however, it is important to revisit briefly the political and strategic context out of which ESDP was born. Understanding the forces that propelled Europe to pursue ESDP in the first place is crucial to assessing its prospects for future growth and success.

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<sup>6</sup> As of early 2008, German participation in NATO's ISAF mission appeared to be maxed out. See, for example, "Berlin weist Anfrage der Amerikaner ab", In: *faz.net*, February 1, 2008. There are rumors that Germany felt that France had forced it to accept the leadership of the 2006 EUFOR DRC mission. On German deployments overseas see Stefan Mair, ed., *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr*, SWP-Studie, Berlin, 2007, esp. pp. 11-34. On German defense policy and ESDP see Franz-Josef Meiers, "Germany's Defence Choices", In: *Survival*, 47:1, Spring, 2005, pp. 153-165.



# The Significance of ESDP's Origins

The history of Europe's efforts to forge a common security policy is conventionally traced back to the failed European Defense Community of the 1950s, and through subsequent attempts to create common European security institutions outside of NATO. None of the previous attempts, however, amounted to much. Hence, understanding what was different about the context in which ESDP was born is crucial to understanding the forces that are driving it.<sup>7</sup> The origins of ESDP are normally traced to a joint communiqué issued by French President Jacques Chirac and British Prime Minister Tony Blair in December 1998 at St. Malo.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The forces that gave ESDP its impetus have been explained from different perspectives. For a discussion of the debate over ESDP's origins see Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, pp. 33-60. See also, Seth Jones, *The Rise of European Security Cooperation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007; Anja Dalgaard-Nielson, "Half-Full, Half-Empty", In: *Survival*, 50:1, February/ March 2008, pp. 209-216.

<sup>8</sup> Reproduced in Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, pp. 34-5.

There are different ways of “explaining” ESDP. But few would deny that without the Balkan wars, the project would never have taken off. The wars may not have been the only condition necessary, but they were surely a critical one. The Balkan wars required two major U.S. military interventions in Europe – the first in 1995 consisted of bombing against Serb installations and a large NATO stabilization force, while the second consisted in a U.S. led NATO air campaign over Serbia and Kosovo in 1999.<sup>9</sup> The fact that U.S. “hard” military power twice proved the crucial element in keeping the peace on the Continent in the post Cold War era was surely a disappointment to those who believed that the post-Maastricht European Union’s liberal formula for peace would be sufficient for that task. U.S. interventions were also frustrating to those Europeans of a Gaullist bent who believed that the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Europe’s East would naturally mean the withdrawal of the United States from Europe’s West. On a more basic level, dependence on U.S. power was also a blow to the reputation and legitimacy of Western Europe’s major powers in their own region as well as that of the EU.

Such were the broad political costs of the U.S. intervention. Of no less significance, however, were the practical drawbacks of reliance on U.S. power. Given that it seemed the indispensable power in these operations, the United States naturally expected to run the show.<sup>10</sup> But U.S. thinking about how to conduct these operations often differed from European. In part this difference was the result of different military traditions and doctrines. On a more fundamental level, however, it reflected the fact that while the United States and Europe shared broad and overlapping interests in their Balkan interventions, these interests were not identical. Proximity to the conflict, among other things, led Europe to prefer a somewhat different strategy than the United States. But with the U.S. in control of most of the military operations, Europe found itself in a weak position to press its preferences and thus protect its interests in those particular areas where they differed from those of the United States.

A common European problem thus became clear: In the post cold war political strategic environment, the United States and Europe, while sharing many common interests, did not share all interests to the same degree. Absent the overarching existential threat posed by the Soviet Union, the post-Cold War security problems would always seem more pressing for one side of the Atlantic than on the other. Military strategies would differ accordingly. The need for a European capability to respond in some cases without reliance on the United States was thus evident.

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<sup>9</sup> There is much literature on the diplomacy of the Balkan wars. See David Owen, *Balkan Odyssey*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1995; Richard Holbrooke, *To End A War*, New York: Random House, 1998; Ivo H. Daalder, *Getting to Dayton*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Press, 2000; Derek H. Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords*, New York: Palgrave, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> On these issues see, Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Press, 2000; Wesley Clark, *Waging Modern War*, New York: Public Affairs, 2001; Andrew J. Bacevich and Eliot A. Cohen, eds., *War Over Kosovo*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001; Dana Allin, *NATO’s Balkan Interventions*, IISS, Adelphi paper 347, 2002.

ESDP was thus the result of structural changes in the world political system brought about by the end of the Cold War.<sup>11</sup> But this does not necessarily mean that it was aimed at balancing the United States or any other power for that matter.<sup>12</sup> Rather it was aimed at providing flexibility in a more fluid world where the U.S. and Europe would not always see eye to eye.<sup>13</sup> These original aims of ESDP are too often lost sight of in debates over ESDP's future. Focusing on these aims, however, may well be the necessary condition for the future progress of ESDP. The extent to which momentum for a common security policy at the European level can be maintained if other purposes are pursued is uncertain.<sup>14</sup> For example, the argument that ESDP is needed to give military weight to the European Union may not do the trick.<sup>15</sup> The need to establish a tool that allows European states to respond to security problems in which their interests are more intensively or differently involved than those of the United States should remain the main focus of the project.

Indeed, after a decade, though it has added value, ESDP still does not provide European states with the capability that was its original impetus – the ability to respond to a medium-sized regional crisis without subordinating themselves to the United States.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> For the structuralist argument see Seth Jones, *Rise of European Security Cooperation*, op.cit.

<sup>12</sup> On balancing see Barry R. Posen, "ESDP and the Structure of World Power", In: *The International Spectator*, 34:1, 2004.

<sup>13</sup> For an alternative view see Stephanie Hoffman, "Why Am I? That is the question. Norm contestation, reinforcement and coexistence and the creation of CFSP", In: *Cahiers européens de Sciences Po*, 2004, available at <http://www.portedeurope.org/cahiers.asp>.

<sup>14</sup> See also Philip H. Gordon, "Europe's Uncommon Foreign Policy", In: *International Security*, 22:3, Winter 1997-8, pp. 74-100.

<sup>15</sup> The most obvious expression of this is the European Security Strategy, "A Secure Europe in a Better World", Brussels, December 12, 2003, p.1.

<sup>16</sup> On ESDP's added value in nation building see James Dobbins, et. al, *Europe's Role in Nation Building*, Santa Monica: RAND, 2008; Christopher S. Chivvis, "Preserving Progress in the Democratic Republic of Congo", In: *Survival*, 49:2, June/ July, 2007, pp. 21-41; Chivvis, "The Making of Macedonia", In: *Survival*, 50:2, April/ May 2008.



# Three Models for ESDP

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Discussions with officials and analysts in Brussels and in European capitals suggest three possible models for ESDP's future, only one of which conforms to the foregoing imperative.<sup>17</sup> These models are more often implicit than explicit – more “visions” than concrete plans. Nevertheless sketching them seems useful if only to help structure debate. In the first, “ESDP Light” model, ESDP is capable of small-scale operations of a primarily civilian nature. These might even take place far from Europe's borders. Here, Europe, or the EU at least, remains true to what some see as its “Venusian” self.<sup>18</sup> ESDP is today closest to this light model. The second, “Ares” model envisages an ESDP capable of major war both within and beyond Europe – an exclusively European NATO. This is the least likely and potentially most dangerous model, even to prepare. A third “Athenian” model – so called after the Greek goddess of war – would aim to ensure that Europe has an ability to respond to crises where its interests are involved more intensively than those of the United States. In Athena's model there are at least two major sub-models that need to be considered. In one, Europe focuses on building capability for large-scale stabilization and nation building operations such as those that have been undertaken in the Balkans under NATO or the UN. In the other sub-model, Europe focuses on building technological competence to make possible, for example, an air campaign on the model of NATO's 1999 Operation *Allied Force* (OAF).

## ***ESDP light***

In the first model, ESDP would develop into a dependable junior partner for stabilization and reconstruction missions already under way under UN, NATO, or national authority. The EU would be able to handle the Petersburg tasks of humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping provided the scale is very small and the conditions are permissive.<sup>19</sup> The EU might also develop some capability for disaster response within Europe and nearby. Its main focus, however, would be civilian-military missions. These would normally consist of a few hundred personnel in support of larger multinational operations, as has been the case, for example, in the EU

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<sup>17</sup> The following discussion is based on off the record discussions with officials from the European Council, European Commission, NATO, and the diplomatic representations of number of states to the EU conducted during November and December of 2007.

<sup>18</sup> To use Robert Kagan's familiar term, first introduced in Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness: Why the United States and Europe See the World Differently”, In: *Policy Review*, N° 113, June/ July, 2002.

<sup>19</sup> On the Petersburg tasks see Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy*, p. 103.

police training mission in Afghanistan, the EU's security and police advisory missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the EU's advisory mission in the Palestinian territories. Peacemaking missions operating under a Chapter VII UN resolution authorizing a more extensive use of force – even on a comparatively small scale such as the EU Artemis mission in the town of Bunia, Congo in 2005 – would be relatively and perhaps increasingly infrequent. Medium-scale peacekeeping operations would be left to NATO, the UN, or “coalitions of the willing”. ESDP would remain a junior partner of the UN or NATO.

ESDP light is not out of the question. The model in fact appears to be gaining favor in some circles. It is especially comfortable for countries that want to support ESDP in spirit – either because they want to prove themselves “good Europeans” – but are unwilling or unable to offer more in terms of military or political support. ESDP light is, for example, comfortable to both the German left and the British right.

The model, however, poses inherent problems. To begin with, it sometimes seems grounded in the belief that the European Union has a special aptitude for civilian-military missions.<sup>20</sup> This is not necessarily the case. To begin with, the kind of civilian power needed for stabilization and reconstruction and most other civilian-military missions around the world differs from the kind of civilian or “soft” power that the EU has in abundance – for example through the Euro or Europe's Neighborhood Policy.<sup>21</sup> More importantly, the EU's presumed excellence in civilian operations is largely a statement of comparative rather than absolute advantage. It reflects European military weakness and the fact that, until recently, the United States has shown comparably little interest in the civilian side of stabilization and nation-building efforts. This equation, however, is changing. U.S. foreign policy elites are increasingly concerned with the civilian aspects of nation-building. With the possible exception of the fact that a few European states can deploy *gendarmes* – and even here there are limits – there is, in absolute terms, no good reason why the European Union should be any better placed to train, deploy or sustain civilian missions than the United States. The argument that Europe's imperial experience gives European states a cultural advantage seems questionable given that this experience was for the most part concluded two generations ago. The EU's real advantage in this area is over its own member states, and lies in its ability to gather expertise from a broader pool. This is beneficial, but does not make the EU inherently well suited for civilian military operations. The distinction matters.

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<sup>20</sup> This is the tendency, for example, of German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, “Current German Foreign-Policy Issues at the German Council on Foreign Relations”, Berlin, September 11, 2007.

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of civilian power Europe see Thomas Dietz, “Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering ‘Normative Power Europe’”, In: *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 33:3, 2004). See also François Duchêne, “The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence”, in: Max Kohnstamm and Wolfgang Hager, eds., *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign-Policy Problems before the European Community*, London: Macmillan, 1973; Hanns W. Maull, “Germany and Japan: the New Civilian Powers”, In: *Foreign Affairs* 69:5, 1990, pp. 91-106.

ESDP light might of course still be a useful asset for global nation building, but even in this area it would be a far cry from providing European leaders with a capability to act without reliance on the United States when U.S and European interests differ. It may be necessary to point out the obvious fact that civilian military operations are not a substitute for military stabilization operations, only an important complement to them. An ESDP centered on civilian military operations, even of a much larger scale than those undertaken so far, would thus always play a junior role in a larger international effort. They would provide Europe with no autonomous capability.

### **Ares' ESDP**

A second version of ESDP would consist in a common European defense force complemented with a capability for major interstate war. This ESDP would be capable of high intensity warfare, using many of the latest technological innovations. It might, for example, be capable of regime change to overthrow a rogue state, with or without help from NATO.

At present Ares' ESDP is pure fantasy. Realizing it would obviously take decades. Not only are there are major financial barriers in the way, but any real steps toward it would meet resistance in Washington and, for that matter, many European capitals. Developing this model would furthermore require a major shift in mindset regarding the use of force among some major European states – especially Germany, upon whose economic might much of the capabilities would have to rely. Finally, it could only be achieved with an intensity of military – and probably political – integration that is highly unlikely to be acceptable for many years to come, if ever.

Still, some logics point in this direction. In particular, those who believe that NATO is defunct must logically see ESDP as a replacement of sorts. Even if Ares had only regional reach, absent NATO, Ares would be expected to fill in by providing credible deterrent, including a capability for major offensive operations in the neighborhood. But analysts or officials who see this ESDP even as a long-term possibility, should keep in mind the dangers inherent in any moves in that direction in the short term. Not only would the scent of Ares turn heads, but it could easily undermine ESDP's near term effectiveness, if it diverts precious resources into high end programs that provide no practical, near term benefits. It will be difficult to maintain the political focus and energy needed for such a project if the payoff is a generation away at best. In the meantime, more practical near-term needs could suffer.

### **Athena's ESDP**

In classical Greek literature, the rough and unpredictable nature of the war god Ares is sometimes contrasted to the more careful strategies of the war goddess Athena.<sup>22</sup> The basis of the Athenian model would be to provide

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<sup>22</sup> On Athena's birth see Hesiod, *The Theogony*, ll. 929a-929t. For a recent scholarly discussion of Athena's various interpretations and roles see Michael

Europe with the ability to take action to resolve problems that threaten European interests more intensively than U.S. interests. It would be focused, in other words, on responding to precisely the problems that gave rise to ESDP in the 1990s. The vast majority of such crises would occur in Europe itself, on Europe's borders, or in neighboring regions. Athena would not undertake major combat operations since any case that required them would surely also involve key U.S. interests, thus making NATO the appropriate tool.

Athena's ESDP could take two basic forms. It could be aimed primarily at medium to large-scale stabilization and reconstruction operations or it could aim to provide Europe with the capability to subdue or coerce a neighboring state whose actions the EU deems intolerable. It seems useful to assess these two sub-models separately, despite the fact that EU military capabilities are normally assessed on a spectrum from the simplest to the most challenging military operations (a method whereby stabilization falls a step or two further down the spectrum from coercive operations).<sup>23</sup> Without drawing this widely accepted conceptual framework into question, it should be noted that the experience of stabilization and reconstruction operations in the last few years suggests that the spectrum is not as continuous as it sometimes seems.<sup>24</sup> Some capabilities required for stabilization are not needed for coercive operations. In some respects, requirements for stability operations go over and beyond those needed for coercive operations. This is especially the case when stabilization operations involve a counterinsurgency dimension. Even when they do not, however, they may still require large numbers of highly or specially trained ground forces, with special skills and experience interfacing with civilians engaged in a broader nation building effort. Meanwhile, coercive operations that aim to achieve Athena's political goals do not necessarily involve substantial troop commitments, but will almost certainly be more technologically intensive. (Of course, a purely "European" strategy for the 1999 OAF campaign might have used more troops, but the basic distinction would no doubt still hold.) It thus may be useful to consider the two sub-models separately.

### ***Stabilizing Athena***

European political leaders might want a stabilization capability, for example, to end factional fighting in a nearby state or to respond to a regional state failure that threatens to start a broader conflict or create a mass humanitarian crisis that inundates Europe with refugees. They might also seek a stabilization capacity to ensure influence in any nation building mission that follows a crisis, or simply because a UN or NATO operation is not an option. This version of Athenian ESDP would thus assume either that NATO undertakes initial combat operations and then hands them off to

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Murrin, "Athena and Telemachus", In: *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 13:4, April 2007, pp. 499-515.

<sup>23</sup> For example by Julian Lindley-French and Franco Algeri, *A European Defence Strategy*, Bertelsmann, May 2004.

<sup>24</sup> On these differences see Etienne de Durand, "Quel format d'armée pour la France?", In: *Politique Étrangère*, N° 4, 2007, pp. 729-742.

the EU, or that the EU is acting in response to state collapse and that the requirements for high-end kinetic operations are minimal.

How close is Europe to this model today? To accomplish these objectives Europe would need sufficient troops, the means of getting them in theater, and the ability to sustain them. Several specific tasks are involved in today's increasingly complex stabilization operations, but for general illustrative purposes it is useful to focus primarily on troops and transport.

Starting with troops, most analysts assume that Europe has 170,000 deployable troops – some 10 percent of the total number of Europe's forces.<sup>25</sup> This figure is based on limitations on deployability, readiness, training, and other factors. (It is supported by the fact that this is roughly the number of troops necessary to sustain the some 60,000 European troops deployed overseas at present.) EU member states thus have the manpower to conduct stabilization missions in peaceful and permissive circumstances in two countries of roughly 25 million inhabitants each.<sup>26</sup> In hostile circumstances, these figures would probably have to be reduced by a power of ten, such that Europe could pacify only one country of some five million inhabitants. Such estimates are crude of course, but they suggest that Europe has sufficient troops to conduct a stabilization operation in Morocco or Algeria, but only under permissive circumstances. It could handle a heavier peace enforcement responsibility in Lebanon or possibly Libya or Moldova, but would be hard pressed to do the same, for example, in Tunisia. If the initial troop ratios used in Kosovo and Bosnia were the model, however, *Europe could not accomplish any of these*, or for that matter, undertake a peace enforcement mission in Bosnia in the unlikely yet not impossible event that it were to collapse again. Only stabilization in Cyprus and Kosovo would be within reach.

It should be noted that the EU Battlegroups do not add any additional troops, but rather make a small number of troops immediately available to EU operations. They will be useful, perhaps critical, in the event of a small-scale crisis within Europe or nearby and may serve as a useful proving ground for larger scale cooperation. But they do not in themselves provide much in the way of new European capabilities, since they represent only a reconfiguration of existing forces under EU command. The

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<sup>25</sup> See Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy*, p. 103; Lindley-French and Algieri, *European Defence Strategy*, p. 10, 27; Bastian Giegerich and William Wallace, "Not Such a Soft Power: The External Deployment of European Forces", In: *Survival*, 46: 2, June 2004, pp. 163-182.

<sup>26</sup> These and the following calculations are based on the following assumptions: 1) A 3:1 troop rotation. 2) That stabilization in a permissive environment where a conflict has been peacefully resolved requires normally an average of 1 soldier per 1,000 inhabitants, whereas peace enforcement in a non-permissive environment requires normally 13 soldiers per 1,000 inhabitant. In Bosnia there were 19 per 1,000 and in Kosovo 20 per 1,000. James Dobbins et al., *Beginners Guide to Nation Building*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, pp. 37-41.

Battlegroups are furthermore designated solely as a crisis response force and are thus not available for “planned” operations, for example, in Chad.<sup>27</sup>

To undertake the stabilization missions just outlined, European troops would also require transport. Europe’s widely discussed lack of strategic transport means that it would not be able to carry out any of the operations just noted with the aircraft it owns today. Leasing aircraft is a possibility, but has limitations – both practical and political.<sup>28</sup> The current A400M program, however, promises to improve the situation significantly over time. Purchasing 170 A400Ms, as planned, will give Europe a minimum range that includes West Africa, North Africa, most of the Middle East, the Caucasus and parts of Central Asia.<sup>29</sup> Central Africa is also within range for direct flights, but only if the planes are not fully loaded.<sup>30</sup> Further distances are obviously possible with refueling stop-overs. Unlike the C-130s, the A400M should also be able to carry most of the equipment needed for stabilization operations, including light armored vehicles.<sup>31</sup> The upshot is that once the A400M program is complete Europe will have considerable airlift capability for most operations the EU may wish to undertake.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, many peacekeeping and peace enforcement situations would probably have substantial lead-time, and some troops could thus be transported by sea. This would be especially likely if the operation were large. European sealift capability has also been growing, although the

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<sup>27</sup> On the Battlegroups see Gustav Lindstrom, *Enter the EU Battlegroups*, Chaillot Paper N° 97, EU-ISS, Paris, 2007; Jim Dorschner, “Difficult Start for EU Battlegroups”, In: *Janes Defence Weekly*, December 12, 2007.

<sup>28</sup> Europe has two transport planes of relevance, the C-130 and the C-17. The C-130 has a range of 7,800 KM, can carry 92 troops, or 19 MT. It is too small, however, to carry some critical equipment for stabilization, such as light and medium tanks. The C-17 can, but Europe has very few of these planes. At present there are three programs to improve lift capacity temporarily. The British have leased 5 C-17s, though at high cost. Some NATO members are collectively buying 3 C-17s that will also be available for EU missions. The SALIS agreement makes 5 AN-124s available to leave. On these issues in general, see Lindstrom, *Enter the EU Battlegroups*, pp. 31-45. See also Joris Janssen Lok, “A400M: The Airlifter that Waits in the Wings”, May 1, 2003. On SALIS see Gerhard Hegmann, “EADS, Lufthansa in Transport Venture”, In: *Financial Times*, June 29, 2004; James Murphy, “NATO to Lease An-124s as an Interim Solution”, In: *Janes Defence Weekly*, February 8, 2006.

<sup>29</sup> Belgium (7); France (50); Germany (60); Luxembourg (1); Spain (27); UK (25).

<sup>30</sup> The range of the planes varies substantially depending on load. They can fly 6,000 KM when loaded to the full capacity of the C-130, but only 3,450 when loaded to their full capacity of 27 MT. Lindstrom, *Enter the EU Battlegroups*, pp. 37-8. In theory this means the A400M could transport 7,200 personnel with equipment to Kuwait in 620 sorties of 20 hours each, but only with refueling in Cyprus. This would take 15 days. James Murphy, “NATO to Lease An-124s.”

<sup>31</sup> Up to the heaviest versions. The Puma IFV, for example, weighs some 31 tons in the basic package, but can exceed 40 tons with additional armor packages.

<sup>32</sup> To take a purely hypothetical example for solely illustrative purposes: 10,000 troops, all transported by plane, carrying 15,000 tons of equipment would take about a week to deploy to the Middle East. For further discussion of the A400M capabilities see Gustav Lindstrom, *Enter the EU Battlegroups*, p. 37-40.

programs are national and not as high-profile as the A400M program. Moving several thousand troops over a long distance might still be a real challenge.<sup>33</sup>

There are, of course, several other requirements for effective stabilization operations. Europe no doubt has enough airpower to serve the purposes of establishing air superiority as a deterrent in most stabilization situations, as well as enough heavy tanks should they be needed. Europe also has ample aircraft for tactical transport. Shortages of attack and transport helicopters have been widely discussed.<sup>34</sup> Although Europe has substantial paramilitary police capability, only a small fraction of these police are deployable abroad. European countries might also face shortages of mechanized infantry fighting vehicles and UAVs suitable for some situations. Perhaps most importantly, it is essential to keep in mind that large deliveries of the A400M are not scheduled to begin until 2012, and all the planes will not have arrived until 2018. In the meantime, European stabilization capability will remain restricted by a lack of strategic lift.

This broad-brush assessment of Europe's capabilities foundation for stabilization operations is thus, on balance, positive for the medium term. Crucially, however, *it is based on an assumption that may not hold*. Today, nearly all of Europe's 170,000 troops are currently occupied sustaining Europe's current overseas deployments. The above assessment, however, assumes that all these troops are available. The troops would thus either have to be withdrawn from current deployments or the current level of deployment would have to decline. How likely are either of these? It is unlikely that European leaders would be willing to pull out of all – or even most – current commitments. It is also unlikely that these commitments will decrease. On the one hand, of course, today's deployment levels may be high due to the fact that so many U.S. troops are deployed in Iraq. While these troops are obviously not available for European deployments, were they not in Iraq they might be available to lighten Europe's load elsewhere. British troops in Iraq would furthermore presumably be directly available to Europe. On the other hand, for the current global level of troop deployments to fall, the rate of new troop commitments would need to be less than the rate at which troops are withdrawn. This seems very unlikely, given the fact that most stabilization missions are now measured in decades rather than months. Hence, from a European perspective, the current level should probably, with some adjustment for Iraq, be taken a baseline guide. This means that more troops will be needed over and beyond this level if ESDP is to have the ability to respond effectively to

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<sup>33</sup> France has four ships that might be used, each carry less than 500 troops. Spain and the Netherlands each have two ships of similar size. Britain has one larger ship (LPD) that can carry 800 troops. Still, sealift had to be chartered for the Nordic Battlegroup's operations in 2007. Jim Dorschner, "Difficult Start for EU Battlegroups", In: *Janes Defence Weekly*, December 12, 2007. Aside from the UK, which has several ships, Denmark has two, France 2 charters, Germany one, and Norway one. Joris Janssen Lok, "NATO's Strategic Sealift Capabilities Gather Pace", In: *Jane's Navy International*, April 1, 2005.

<sup>34</sup> On the need for helicopters see, for example, NATO Spokesman James Appathurai, Press Briefing, October 17, 2007.

crises without breaking previous engagements to NATO, the UN, or itself.<sup>35</sup> This is a very important point, too often overlooked.

### **Coercive Athena**

In the second Athenian version of ESDP, Europe would aim to develop a capability for coercive operations whose purpose was to deter or destroy the capabilities of a lesser regional power. This capability might be desirable from a classical perspective to deter one state from attacking another and thereby prevent a regional conflict. More likely, however, the political aim would be – as in OAF – to stop a genocide or other state sponsored mass violence. Since neither of these political aims would involve a direct threat to Europe, even if they involved significant European interests, European leaders would probably need not only the power to coerce or destroy the enemy, but also the ability to do so without incurring large numbers of enemy civilian casualties.

Independent European action would be necessary if the United States was disinclined to participate. Alternatively, European leaders might want this capability so that they could control the conduct of the operation, or simply to demonstrate their political power and regional hegemony. Finally, building a capability for coercive action might also bring benefits in terms of power and prestige, not to mention political economy since it would most likely involve continuing to develop Europe's indigenous higher end military hardware industries.

How close is Europe to having such coercive capabilities? For illustrative purposes it is appropriate to assume – as many have – an air campaign like OAF.<sup>36</sup> Europe made substantial contribution to the OAF campaign with conventional attack aircraft.<sup>37</sup> However, these aircraft relied heavily on the United States for Command and Control, Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD), and air-to-air refueling. Moreover, most European planes could not operate in bad weather, and only Britain was able to offer precision-guided bombs in substantial quantities.<sup>38</sup>

Efforts to build European capabilities in these areas since have led to the purchase of more precision munitions by the Netherlands (though in a small number) as well as Britain and France, as well as some expansion

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<sup>35</sup> For an alternative view see Giegerich and Wallace, "Not Such a Soft Power" *op.cit.*

<sup>36</sup> The OAF model might be somewhat high end for the political purposes outlined above, and a purely European strategy could perhaps involve less reliance on airpower and greater use of ground forces if possible. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that it would be possible to completely or even substantially replace airpower with a ground invasion if the aim is coercion.

<sup>37</sup> For the French assessment of its contribution see the French Report on the conflict, Assemblée Nationale, no. 2022, December 15, 1999, esp. part IV, "Les enseignements militaires du conflit."

<sup>38</sup> See David S. Yost, "U.S.-European Capabilities Gap and the Prospects for ESDP", in: Howorth and Keeler, *Defending Europe: The EU, Europe, and the Quest for European Autonomy*, New York: Palgrave, 2003, esp. pp. 88-91.

of European air-to-air refueling capacity.<sup>39</sup> Europe's ability to collect intelligence from its satellite systems, and, more importantly, share that intelligence, has also improved. Germany has SEAD capabilities, although their value could be limited in a high-intensity conflict on account of caveats. Perhaps most importantly, Europe has acquired precision guided munitions that it lacked in the 1990s, though the stocks are relatively low.<sup>40</sup>

In general, European capabilities for a high-intensity conflict are probably best characterized as "mixed". Europe today could probably carry out a coercive operation nearby, provided it were willing to accept some troop and equipment losses, to divert part of its refueling aircraft from national defense and deterrence operations, and were able to draw on the capabilities of all its member states. The main obstacle to an OAF type operation would thus be probably be political. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that *the more advanced European capabilities are, the easier the political decision* – already difficult among so many member states – is apt to be.

It is important to point out, furthermore, that this assessment assumes that Europe gets no help from elsewhere. How necessary is this assumption? For some, autonomy from NATO and the United States is precisely the point of ESDP. *But it is not at all clear that absolute autonomy is necessary* – or even desirable – to achieve the political aims that ESDP was intended to serve. In many situations, European political autonomy will ultimately derive far more from the ability to carry the bulk of a significant operation, even with some help from NATO, than from a competitive technical autonomy from "non-European" states. After all, individual European states have always had the capacity to conduct such small scale operations outside NATO if pressed. The 2003 Artemis mission is a case in point – it was largely French. This is another key point.

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<sup>39</sup> Germany, for example, is transforming four of its seven A310s into Multirole Transport Tankers (MRTTs) with refueling capabilities. David Mulholland, "Canada, Germany receive A310 multirole tankers", In: *Janes Defence Weekly*, October 6, 2004. At the time of writing, these are not yet available for use, however. Britain is also planning to acquire A330s with refueling capabilities and France may eventually do so.

<sup>40</sup> France, Germany, Britain, and the Netherlands, for example, have all acquired JDAMs, GPS guided or Laser Guided Bombs. Some experts claim that low stocks is unproblematic since traditional "dumb" bombs can be refitted with guidance systems with relative ease – provided the United States is willing to sell the guidance systems in a pinch.



# Building Athena: ESDP and Europe's Capabilities Foundation

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ESDP must ultimately be built on the capabilities foundation of Europe's member states, that is, the overall sum of their personnel, equipment, readiness, deployability, and so forth. How can ESDP strengthen this foundation?

The gap between the United States and Europe in military capabilities has been widely commented on.<sup>41</sup> The European Union as a whole has approximately the same Gross Economic Product as the United States but spends roughly half what the United States spends on its militaries. For that half, moreover, the EU gets only a fraction of the capabilities that the United States does, partially because it spends in a fragmented, and therefore relatively inefficient way, and partially because the United States benefits from increasing returns to scale. As the foregoing discussion suggests, an autonomous European Security and Defense Policy that responds to an appropriate set of needs should not match the United States, and discussions of Europe's capabilities shortcomings focus too frequently on the gap between the United States and Europe rather than European insufficiencies considered in their own right. To be sure, from a U.S. perspective, the "capabilities problem" is that many European states are less and less able to make major contributions to NATO missions. From a European perspective, however, the problem is rather that Europe remains dependent on the United States for its security in far too many areas.<sup>42</sup>

ESDP might help expand Europe's capabilities. Indeed, this is the main reason the United States has tended to support it in the past. For some European countries, initiatives to improve capabilities undertaken through the EU may have more legitimacy than those currently underway at NATO. However, the European Capabilities Action Plan that has been in

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<sup>41</sup> For example, Lindley-French and Algieri, *A European Defence Strategy*, *op.cit.*; Michael O'Hanlon, "The American way of war: the lessons for Europe" *A European Way of War*, CER, 2004; David S. Yost, "U.S.-European Capabilities Gap and the Prospects for ESDP", in: Howorth and Keeler, *Defending Europe: The EU, Europe, and the Quest for European Autonomy*, New York: Palgrave, 2003, pp. 81-106; Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, pp. 92-134; Giegerich and Wallace, "Not Such a Soft Power" *op. cit.*

<sup>42</sup> See also Lindley-French and Algieri, *A European Defence Strategy*, pp. 27ff.

place since 2001 however, has so far accomplished only minor material gains.<sup>43</sup>

This is of course not for lack of effort. Expanding capabilities is and will continue to be very challenging. There are three basic ways that ESDP can help expand overall European capabilities. None are easy.

First, the EU could help rationalize the European defense industry to bring down the cost of European arms. This will be difficult, however, since rationalization is a high friction process in any large industry, including defense. It involves overcoming business interests at the national level, and usually firing workers. Today's uncertain economic environment would make this even more difficult – a reminder that the strength of European defense ultimately depends on the overall strength of the European economy. Efforts at industrial cooperation thus too often do not result in increased efficiencies.

Second, the EU could simply press states to spend more on defense, for example, through a Defense Stability Pact similar to the stability and growth pact that was introduced in the 1990s on the road to European Monetary Union.<sup>44</sup> But not only does the Stability and Growth Pact limit the scope for government spending, it has itself proven difficult to enforce. Moreover, whereas the Stability and Growth Pact was in fact desirable from some leaders perspectives because it transferred responsibility for fiscal discipline to the EU level, it is unclear that the same interest would exist in the case of defense spending – how many European governments would actually see being “forced” to spend more on defense as a plus?

Third, it is often noted that military integration offers the possibility of improving the overall efficiency of European military spending by eliminating capabilities redundancies at the European level and thereby freeing up funds for other kinds of spending. But it is easy to exaggerate the extent to which such efficiencies can be achieved since some large states are never going to accept complete interdependence.<sup>45</sup> Given this, some analysts have called for a gradual, bottom-up approach to integration by which European militaries pool resources in some areas, thereby

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<sup>43</sup> The European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) was first introduced in 2001 after the Helsinki Summit to help provide Europe with the capabilities needed to fulfill the Headline Goal of deploying and sustaining 60,000 troops abroad for one year. It has evolved over time. Few of the 64 categories of shortcomings had seen substantial improvement as of 2008, with the important exception of airlift, as discussed above. On ECAP see Howorth, *Security Policy in the EU*, p.103. For specific progress see the European Capabilities Improvement Charts published by the EU, at: [www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/misc/89593.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/misc/89593.pdf).

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Volker Heise, “The ESDP and the Transatlantic Relationship”, SWP Research Paper, 11, November 2007, p.12, p.20.

<sup>45</sup> Hence brute estimates of the possible efficiency gains from integration can exaggerate the potential, as for example in O'Hanlon, “The American way of war: the lessons for Europe”, In: *A European Way of War*, CER, 2004, p. 51.

building efficiencies over time.<sup>46</sup> But even here there is no guarantee that the dividend yielded will go toward improving military capabilities – it might simply be diverted from defense to other national priorities.

ESDP is thus probably a necessary but not sufficient condition for further expansion of European capabilities. In this respect, it is crucial that it not become a means of further reducing European budgets. *Integration itself does not increase capabilities, unless the money saved is spent on defense.* With these general conditions in mind, there are four specific steps that European leaders could take to help build capabilities through ESDP.

First, it is very important to establish clear priorities in the near and medium term. The various documents that guide EU defense planning – the Petersberg tasks, the European Security Strategy, the European Headline Goal, European Headline Goal 2010 – taken together, or even alone, set out a very wide range of possible purposes that ESDP should serve. As a result, the European capabilities assessment process is based on five scenarios. The first four are developed from the Petersberg tasks and include separation of parties by force, humanitarian response, conflict prevention, and evacuation operations.<sup>47</sup> The fifth, stabilization and reconstruction, is a newer addition that emerged from the European Convention.<sup>48</sup> The whole process of improving capabilities moves forward on all of these together, rather than by prioritizing some issues over others. Meanwhile, the European Defense Agency has been given the near Herculean task of encouraging the growth of capabilities in a way that is both politically and economically acceptable and maintains the European defense industrial base. Without clear priorities, such tasks near the impossible. Prioritization must come from the political level and ideally be based on a consensus about which model of ESDP to shoot for. Here, even a clear agreement between France and Germany would be a major breakthrough. On a more concrete level, the use of abstract rather than concrete scenarios as a basis for identifying gaps<sup>49</sup> – a political decision – should be reconsidered. Planning for real scenarios will help EU political leadership understand where its most pressing gaps lie.

Second, better use might be made of the Commission to improve capabilities. This is, of course, a very touchy subject. But given that many of the obstacles to improving EU capabilities are political economic in nature, the Commission has a natural role to play. At present, the

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Etienne de Durand, “Together in the Same Boat: Shared Platforms for an Effective Defense”, In: *World Defence Systems*, 7:2, Fall 2004.

<sup>47</sup> On the requirements for these four tasks see Hans-Christian Hagman, *European Crisis Management and Defence: The Search for Capabilities*, IISS, Adelphi Paper 353, 2002, 48-9.

<sup>48</sup> Lindley-French and Algeri, “A European Defence Strategy” p. 21. On the Convention and ESDP see also Steven Everts and Daniel Keohane, “The European Convention and EU Foreign Policy: Learning from Failure”, In: *Survival*, 45:3, Autumn, 2003, pp. 167–186.

<sup>49</sup> As one Council official reported was the case in an interview, Brussels, December 5, 2007.

Commission cooperates with the European Defense Agency on research and development for dual use technologies.<sup>50</sup> This effort could be expanded and intensified. More importantly, the Commission has a key role in promoting economic rationalization of the European defense industry. Rationalization is crucial both to maintain the competitiveness of European industry and hence the European defense industrial base, and also to increase the efficiency of European defense spending, not to mention grow the EU economy. As noted, rationalization is not necessarily any easier politically than raising overall defense spending, but, in economic terms, it is clearly the better choice. Continuing to reducing recourse to Article 296 of the Treaty on European Union, which allows European countries to invoke national security to protect their defense industries, is important in this regard.

Third, in the medium term, European leaders should promote the development of some common platforms – especially those that are “high density/low demand” and those that have dual civilian and military uses, such as transport and communications. This might take place under EU authority – though euro-skeptics would obviously object – and possibly even through the EU budget.<sup>51</sup> The European Parliament could be brought in and lobbied to this end. Any such platforms would probably also need to be made available for European use in NATO operations, in a “reverse Berlin plus” arrangement – a fact that might well prove the main political stumbling block to their development.

Fourth, EU leaders should work to establish a political compact, at least for major states, that pledges to stabilize or even increase defense spending. European defense spending and especially procurement budgets in some key countries, such as Germany, have fallen substantially since the end of the Cold War.<sup>52</sup> While it is not certain that Cold War levels are needed, and the United States need not be the standard, it is clear that if Europe is to augment capabilities, some increase in procurement budgets is unavoidable. The fact is, potential gains from shared platforms, specialization, or further rationalization of European defense industry have their limits. The EU will never spend as efficiently as a nation state for the obvious reason that European states will always want to maintain certain vital capabilities for themselves. Furthermore, increases in defense spending could ease overall defense industry rationalization some, if they allow efficiencies to result in increased production rather than cutbacks.

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<sup>50</sup> Interview at European Defense Agency, Brussels, December 15, 2007.

<sup>51</sup> On this subject see Etienne de Durand, “Together in the Same Boat: Shared Platforms for an Effective Defense,” In: *World Defence Systems*, 7:2, Fall, 2004.

<sup>52</sup> German defense spending was 1.4 percent of GDP in 2005. IISS, *Military Balance*, p. 406. Recent years have seen increases, but only relative to the drop off in the 1990s. An increase in 2007 was achieved only by moving military pensions onto the defense budget, however, not by increasing procurement. See Sebastian Schulte, “German Defense Budget Rises, Largely Thanks to Pension, Retirement Costs” *DefenseNews.com*, December 1, 2006. Moreover, Germany, like France, Italy, the U.K. and other countries, is still committed to purchasing legacy items such as the Eurofighter, which crowd out other spending.

It is perhaps worth noting here that if such increases do not result from ESDP, U.S. enthusiasm for the project is apt to dwindle rapidly. This brings us to the next subject.

## ESDP and Transatlantic Relations

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To succeed, ESDP must not only be built on the development of Europe's military base, it must also be part of a revitalized transatlantic security system. A positive U.S. attitude toward ESDP is a practical prerequisite for ESDP's success. It may be an uncomfortable fact that the United States could derail ESDP, but it is a fact that would be dangerous for European capitals to ignore, and that President Sarkozy appears to appreciate. When first announced, ESDP met with skepticism on the other side of the Atlantic. First the Clinton and then the Bush Administration expressed concern that it might weaken or even destroy the NATO alliance.<sup>53</sup> Although concern over ESDP was soon overshadowed by the larger intra-European and transatlantic rift over the Iraq War in 2003, the NATO-EU relationship is still troubled.<sup>54</sup> Now it is re-emerging as a significant issue.

A good deal has changed in the interim, however. The United States has entered a period of intellectual transformation in which openness to ESDP, given certain conditions, may be greater than at any time in the past or future. Some prominent Democratic foreign policy leaders have in fact already made their positive views on ESDP known.<sup>55</sup> Yet there are still naysayers. U.S. fears about ESDP stem from several sources.<sup>56</sup> Some Americans misunderstand the nature of ESDP. Some believe that the hidden motive of ESDP is to destroy NATO as an effective military alliance. Others see it as a distraction from broader allied aims. Others still simply dislike the European Union and thus have reservations about any project associated with it.<sup>57</sup> Most importantly, perhaps, many in the United States fear that ESDP could mean an end to the U.S. role as *primus inter pares* in NATO. While some of this resistance cannot be

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<sup>53</sup> On these debates see especially Robert Hunter, *The European Security and Defense Policy: NATO's Companion – or Competitor?*, Santa Monica: RAND, 2002); Jolyon Howorth, *Security and Defense Policy in the European Union* (2007), 136-146. An early statement of the U.S. view was Madeleine Albright, "The Right Balance will Secure NATO's Future", In: *Financial Times*, December 7, 1998.

<sup>54</sup> On the effect of the 2003 crisis on ESDP and recovery from it see Anand Menon, "From crisis to catharsis: ESDP after Iraq", In: *International Affairs*, 80:4, 2004, pp. 631-648.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Ronald D. Asmus and Richard C. Holbrooke, "Re-Reinventing NATO," Riga Papers, Riga, Latvia, November 27-9, 2006, p. 10.

<sup>56</sup> See also Christopher S. Chivvis, "Les visions américaines de l'Otan" *Politique Etrangère*, N° 3, 2007, pp. 633-644.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, Sally MacNamara, "The EU Reform Treaty, Why Washington Should Be Concerned", In: *Heritage Foundation Web Memo*, N° 1789, January 30, 2008.

overcome, some of it can, if concerns about ESDP's role in the world and relationship with NATO are assuaged.

One major U.S. complaint about ESDP is that it creates an inherent competition for resources. On a certain level, this is hard to deny since troops for ESDP and NATO missions must come from the same basic pool. This pool is not enormous to begin with and at present is stretched very thin. NATO aims to have 8 percent of its 2.5 million troops available for deployment abroad at any one time. Some experts thus estimate there are as few as 24,000 deployable troops left over in the whole alliance – in other words, fewer than 6,000 sustainable troops if one assumes a 4:1 construct for troop rotations. The shortage of troops was clear during the Fall 2007 force generation conference for the EU mission in Chad, which mustered only 3,500 troops, more than 1,000 short of the original goal, despite the fact that France nearly doubled its contribution.<sup>58</sup>

If one assumes that the overall interests of the transatlantic alliance are served by both NATO and ESDP missions, then this competition might be considered fictitious, and the question of troop allocations incidental. Troops allocated to ESDP missions would serve the same general ends as NATO missions and the choice is simply which tool is more appropriate. While there is a certain truth to this, it is not always going to be the case. Although U.S. and European interests overlap substantially, it would be foolish to presume that they are always the same – indeed the difference is the very justification for ESDP in the first place. Sometimes – although by no means all the time – ESDP missions will draw troops away from NATO priorities.

This is not a reason for the United States to reject ESDP out of hand. Many ESDP missions have and will continue to directly support NATO goals – for example in the Balkans. U.S. concerns about competition remain real, however, especially when it comes to specific tools such as the NATO Response Force. Increasingly the overall number of deployable European troops is the obvious way to make this competition acceptable.

More broadly, insofar as ESDP has political purposes, these conflict with the U.S. self-understanding as the *primus inter-pares* of the NATO alliance. Previous U.S. concerns about “caucusing” within the alliance are derivative of a deeper concern that ESDP will threaten or erode U.S. predominance.<sup>59</sup> These concerns have not gone away. Adapting to a more equal relationship within NATO will thus require more than a change of Administration in the United States.

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<sup>58</sup> Interviews, Brussels, November 2007. See also, Andrew Bounds and Matthew Green, “Delay in deploying Darfur force casts shadow on Lisbon”, In: *Financial Times*, December 8, 2007. For details on the Chad mission see EU Council, “EU Military Operation in Eastern Chad and North Eastern Central African Republic”, January 2008 and the website of the European Union [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/misc/98416.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/misc/98416.pdf).

<sup>59</sup> See Hunter, *The European Security and Defense Policy*, p. 74-7.

### ***Why an EUOHQ is Premature***

One hot issue closely related to these broader questions is whether or not ESDP needs an independent operational headquarters. In the past, this issue has raised the hackles of U.S. leadership, provoking forceful resistance.<sup>60</sup> Although there is no reason why an independent EU headquarters should necessarily threaten NATO, in practice the idea often has, because it has sometimes been presented as an ostentatious symbol of European independence from the United States – as at Tervuren in April 2003 – and the United States has risen to the bait and treated it as such.<sup>61</sup>

At present, operational command and control of ESDP missions is provided through NATO facilities or through the national facilities of European member states. Berlin Plus provides the EU access to SHAPE and other NATO assets as needed. If the EU chooses to operate independently of NATO, however, it can draw on the national headquarters of France, Germany, the U.K., or Greece under the “framework nation” model. This has been the choice for the two ESDP military operations in the DRC and the present operation in Chad. A third option, for civilian-military operations only, is to use the “civ-mil” planning cell located in the EU Military Staff.

The EU thus has no significant independent operational headquarters of its own. Proponents of an EU headquarters insist that for the EU to have a truly “autonomous” capability, it needs to build one. They argue that SHAPE could never be considered independent, and that any operation run from within SHAPE will always on some level be seen as a NATO operation. Moreover, there are valid concerns that access to SHAPE could never be fully “automatic” given the potential resistance of the U.S. and especially Turkey to certain missions.<sup>62</sup> At the same time, it is said that national headquarters are insufficient. Alleged problems with the German command of the 2006 DRC mission are often cited as an example.<sup>63</sup> Although this mission is widely considered to have been successful, some have claimed that the Potsdam facility from which it was run did not work well and that a new, independent European headquarters is thus necessary. A permanent EUOHQ could also conduct advance planning for EU missions on a larger scale and in a more organized manner than in independent national HQs. The need to expand EU capabilities in general also logically suggests expanding command and control.

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<sup>60</sup> For a good discussion of some of the issue surrounding this see Kori Schake, “The United States, ESDP and Constructive Duplication” in Jolyon Howorth and Jon T.S. Keeler eds., *Defending Europe: The EU, NATO and the Quest for European Autonomy*, New York: Palgrave, 2003, pp.107-132.

<sup>61</sup> On Tervuren see, for example, Anand Menon, “From crisis to catharsis: ESDP after Iraq”, In: *International Affairs*, 80:4, 2004, pp. 631-648. On U.S. reaction, see, for example, Thomas Fuller, “Summit talk of close European military ties upsets U.S.”, In: *International Herald Tribune*, October 17, 2003.

<sup>62</sup> It would be very difficult to provide a credible guarantee of access to NATO assets in general. See Kori Schake, “The United States, ESDP and Constructive Duplication,” *op.cit.*

<sup>63</sup> Interviews, Brussels, November 13, November 14, 2007.

These arguments deserve serious consideration. Nevertheless, for the time being, establishing a new OHQ is unlikely to be cost effective. The best way to fix alleged problems with the framework nation concept is not necessarily to abandon it. Presumably, any problems that may or may not have been encountered at Potsdam are part of a learning process that is to be expected in ESDP operations, no matter where they are run, and the German facility has no doubt evolved as a result of the exercise. Indeed, a good deal of the complaints about Potsdam may to an extent reflect different national approaches and military cultures more than objective problems with the facility. These differences would also have to be overcome if the HQ were located in Brussels. Furthermore building a new facility would be a major cost for little present practical benefit. If autonomy is the aim, the framework nation concept is clearly sufficient. Only after the size of ESDP missions increases substantially will improving national headquarters become insufficient. At present, it is the shortage of deployable troops, not a lack of headquarters that is the main bottleneck. The focus should thus be on making more troops available, not building expensive headquarters to command fantasy battalions.

Moreover, beyond cost effectiveness, establishing a new EU headquarters could create other problems. As British officials often point out, the OHQ could face staffing problems.<sup>64</sup> On the one hand, some analysts argue that there is a surfeit of staff officers in Europe – some 13,000 perhaps – and that an EUOHQ would have no problem recruiting officers. (Indeed some want an EUOHQ to serve as a jobs program for Europe's officer corps.) On the other hand, the number of well qualified staff is relatively small, and may even be less than ten percent of the total available personnel – not unlike the number of deployable troops. Accordingly, some key countries – Britain in particular, but possibly others – would have reservations about the quality of the staff at an EUOHQ. This could easily become an excuse for rejecting deployments under EU command. Estimates of what constitutes a qualified officer are subjective, but perception in this case creates reality: If the UK refuses to operate under control from the EUOHQ it will turn out to have been a colossal waste of time, money, not to mention precious political capital.

Finally, even if an EUOHQ does not threaten NATO, the perception that it does could create a backlash that threatens ESDP. Given the questionable practical benefits of an EUOHQ at present, there is a risk that many in the United States will see movement toward it as ideologically driven and aimed at building ESDP as an alternative NATO. Pressing ahead with it before it is necessary thus risks undermining the considerable goodwill President Sarkozy has created with his initiative to reintegrate fully into the Alliance. The time for a new OHQ has thus not yet come. There are too many other problems that need attention first.

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<sup>64</sup> Interviews, Brussels, November 13, December 6, 2007.

### ***The Pressing Need to Fix EU-NATO Working Relationship***

A more pressing issue is the overarching relationship between NATO and ESDP.<sup>65</sup> Here there are three main problems. First, the adequacy of Berlin Plus as a framework for EU-NATO postconflict cooperation is uncertain. Second, EU-NATO security arrangements are incomplete. Third, there are a lack of adequate provisions for EU-US operational cooperation.

To begin with the first, there may be a need to revisit the arrangements that govern EU-NATO cooperation. Today those arrangements are known as Berlin Plus.<sup>66</sup> Berlin Plus was originally envisaged as an agreement that would facilitate EU use of NATO assets, but has now become a means by which NATO countries can block EU participation in NATO missions. When Berlin Plus was designed, the model in mind was large-scale operations like OAF. In this circumstance, the assumption was that ESDP missions would be drawing on major NATO assets, such as SHAPE, to conduct potentially major operations outside the alliance. In this model, it seems obvious that all NATO members should have a veto over the use of NATO assets for ESDP missions. The missions ESDP has undertaken so far, however, are of a different nature. ESDP now often operates alongside NATO, as part of a broader allied effort, not as an altogether separate mission. In Afghanistan, for example, the EU has been helping build the Afghan police, work very important to the overall success of ISAF. Not only is this mission relatively small scale, it is also not independent of NATO's broader aims. Turkey, however, has insisted that EU-NATO cooperation in Afghanistan fall under Berlin Plus, thereby complicating the operation.

The problem is thus not so much that there is some inherent problem with Berlin Plus so much as that times have changed. Because Berlin Plus was designed for cases where "NATO as a whole is not involved", Berlin Plus is not well designed for Afghanistan or the Balkans where the two are working alongside each other. There is no framework for NATO-EU cooperation in post-conflict situations such as these. Establishing a new set of arrangements would probably not end Turkish obstructionism, of course, and any arrangement that cut Turkey out of the picture would not be viable. The larger task is therefore to convince Turkey that obstructing the development of ESDP is counterproductive and unlikely to improve its relationship with the EU, while at the same time reassuring it that ESDP does not threaten NATO, which at present remains Turkey's strongest institutional link with Europe – a symbol of its European vocation. Still, the problem shows that Berlin Plus, while probably still sufficient for situations where NATO and the EU are not operating alongside one another, may no longer be sufficiently comprehensive to govern the changing nature of EU-NATO relations, especially in post-conflict reconstruction where the two organizations work side by side.

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<sup>65</sup> On these issues see also David S. Yost, *NATO and International Organizations*, NATO Defense College, Forum Paper 3, Rome, September 2007; Daniel Keohane, "Unblocking EU-NATO Cooperation," CER Bulletin, Issue 48, June/ July 2006.

<sup>66</sup> Frustration with the state of affairs in both the EU Council and NATO staffs was very high as of late 2007.

A second, related problem concerns the security arrangements between NATO and the EU, which, at present are only viable for 25 of the 27 members of the EU. Cyprus and Malta, because they are not part of NATO or PFP, are excluded from access to classified NATO documents. This creates both operational and planning problems. Operationally, when the Political and Security Committee meets to vote on missions where the EU will draw on NATO for support – Berlin Plus operations – Cyprus and Malta are not privy to all the arrangements, and thus claim they cannot vote in favor. Cyprus, in particular, has obstructed EU missions where NATO is involved on the grounds that it has not been given the full briefing. Although on Kosovo and Afghanistan, Cyprus eventually chose to cooperate without having seen all the arrangements, the possibility for future problems remains. (Turkey is thus also at the center here, although in this case the problem is ostensibly the Turkey-Cyprus standoff rather than Turkey's relationship with the EU.)

In addition, on the defense planning side, the lack of a complete security arrangement restricts the ability of the EU-NATO capabilities working group to exchange information. This is potentially very damaging to efforts to ensure NATO-ESDP defense planning complementarity in the future – another key to developing a workable NATO-EU relationship.<sup>67</sup>

A third, related issue is that there is no established agreement for U.S.-EU bilateral military relations outside NATO.<sup>68</sup> The current practice is that NATO is the node through which all communications between the United States and ESDP must pass. The impracticality of this from an operational standpoint is obvious. If EU commanders on the ground cannot communicate directly with U.S. forces, problems could easily arise, especially in a crisis situation. As U.S. operations in Africa grow, more such situations can be expected, and the problem is apt to intensify. Of course, it is hard to believe that EU and U.S. commanders would not figure out some way to communicate directly in an emergency (provided there is a modicum of interoperability), but there is no reason why they should have to. U.S. and European governments should thus continue to support current efforts underway in Brussels to establish such an agreement.

### ***Turkey, Cyprus and ESDP***

In the past, France was often the country most inclined to impede EU-NATO communication on the grounds that cooperation was destined to degrade the EU's autonomy. This may be declining with the Sarkozy presidency and the simple fact that French troops are on the ground in Afghanistan and Kosovo, where the EU and NATO have to coordinate. Thus Turkey now appears to be the principal antagonist, though Turkish obstructionism may provide political cover for other countries uncertain about their commitment to ESDP.

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<sup>67</sup> On this issue see David S. Yost, *NATO and International Organizations*, NATO Defense College, Forum Paper 3, Rome, September 2007, p.93.

<sup>68</sup> This of course, does not fall under Berlin Plus. On the broader issues of EU-US relations in security area see Francois Heisbourg, "The European Security Strategy is not a security Strategy", In: *A European Way of War*, CER, 2004, 27-39.

Insofar as improving the EU-NATO working relationship is important to how Washington – not to mention several European capitals – views ESDP, fixing the mess that has developed between Turkey, Cyprus, Malta should be a priority for those who want to see ESDP reach its full potential. Unfortunately, the present French government may not be well placed to settle the underlying political issues on account of its policy of resisting Turkish membership in the EU. In the interim, workarounds on the ground may be the only option.

# Optimising Commission-Council Work

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A final future challenge is the continued coordination of European Commission work with ESDP. A great deal has been done, but efforts should continue.

It is now almost commonplace to note that today's security challenges require a higher degree of coordination and cooperation between civilian and military leaders and institutions than at any time during the Cold War. From Bosnia to Kosovo to Iraq and Afghanistan, the need to coordinate civilian and military efforts has become clear. In large part this is because of renewed focus on post-conflict strategy and the rise of nation-building in particular. The new conflicts of the post Cold War era have been of a more limited nature than those expected during the Cold War, but less finite in their beginnings, and especially their ends. As a result, many aspects of state power that once appeared separate – diplomatic, development, or military – must now be used together. The overall foreign policy effort must be coordinated both at the strategic level and on the ground. In the United States a number of studies that reflect on the shortcomings of U.S. policy over the last decade have or will soon appear. These studies recommend ways to integrate U.S. diplomatic, economic, and military power into a more coherent and effective foreign policy tool.<sup>69</sup> The very nature of the EU's focus on "crisis management" means that the EU has at least as great a need – if not greater – to coordinate civilian and military aspects of foreign policy.

This is of course widely recognized in Europe, as in the United States. To a large degree this coordination should (and increasingly does) take place within ESDP missions themselves, and between ESDP missions and those of national and multinational partners. There may still be some room for improvement here. There has reportedly been some resistance from the civilian side to the use of military planning and procedures for civilian missions, despite the fact that most civilian missions require the same elements as military missions – transport, logistical support, communications, etc.<sup>70</sup> Beyond this, how a real bottom-up integration of

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<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Clark A. Murdock, Michele Flournoy, et al., *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: U.S. Government and Defense Reform For a New Strategic Era*, Phase 2 Report, Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2005 and the forthcoming RAND Corporation American Academy of Diplomacy Report on "Integrating Instruments of Power and Influence" by Robert Hunter et al.

<sup>70</sup> Interview at European Council, Brussels, December 5, 2007.

civilian and military missions might be accomplished is a major question both for the United States, NATO, and ESDP, and goes beyond the scope of this essay. Needless to say, however, such efforts are underway at the European level and deserve continued support.

More importantly, in the broader EU context the need for the integration of Europe's various instruments of power and influence extends across pillars. If ESDP is to have maximum effect, the Commission will need to play a larger role supporting it. The idea that the EU can be an autonomous actor, a presumption based in large part on the EU's economic size, seems doubtful unless the financial resources and economic power of the Commission are brought to bear.<sup>71</sup>

Some minor problems are in the process of being resolved on the operational level. First, the Commission is responsible for disbursing funds for ESDP civil operations, and does so according to its own regulations, which can at times be somewhat slow, especially in emergency situations. Some ESDP operations have been hampered as a result.<sup>72</sup> Some progress has been made, however, in accelerating the disbursement of funds. More would no doubt help. A second, more important issue regards the coordination of Commission efforts with ESDP missions on the ground. Problems here were evident in Macedonia<sup>73</sup> and the 2003 Artemis mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>74</sup> The practice of double-hatting EU special representatives appears to have had some positive effect, as should the Lisbon treaty.

The value added of Commission cooperation with ESDP, however, has the greatest potential at the macro-level. The Commission has several instruments on which it might draw to support ESDP operations. These include, in particular, the European Development Fund, the EU's Humanitarian Aid Fund, and the Stabilization Instrument. On a certain level the Commission and Council will always share common goals, since ESDP missions tend to take place in areas where the Commission has already invested substantial funds. For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has been the target of no less than four ESDP operations, two civil and two military, is also the fifth largest recipient of Commission aid. Chad, however, does not figure in the top twenty, at least for 2004 and

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<sup>71</sup> On the resources of the Commission for civilian crisis management see Catriona Gourlay, "Community instruments for civilian crisis management" in Agnieszka Nowak, ed., *Civilian crisis management: the EU way*, Chaillot Paper, N° 90, June 2006, pp.49-67.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with EU Council official, Brussels, December 2007.

<sup>73</sup> On the difficulties that occurred in coordinating Council and Commission in the Proxima Police mission see Isabelle Ioannides, "EU Police Mission *Proxima*: testing the European approach to building peace", in Agnieszka Nowak, ed., *Civilian crisis management: the EU way*, Chaillot Paper, N° 90, June 2006, pp.69-86.

<sup>74</sup> See the article by Artmeis Operational Commander Bruno Neveux, "Vers une Union opérationnelle? Artemis" *Défense Nationale*, May 2004, pp. 11-24. See also, Stale Ulriksen, Catriona Gourlay, Catriona Mace, "Operation Artemis: the Shape of Things to Come?", In: *International Peacekeeping*, 11:3, Autumn, 2004, pp. 508-525, esp. p. 515.

2005.<sup>75</sup> The point is that Commission aid could do a great deal to leverage the efforts of ESDP missions.

Two projects from the Lisbon treaty should further enhance coordination. The introduction of a European External Service may help to encourage further synergies between the Commission and ESDP, at least on the ground, while the unification of the EUHR for CFSP and the External Commissioner may also help to bring greater cohesion at the strategic level. The details of the external service, however, remain unclear, and the personality of the individual chosen for the new Commissioner/EUHR position will be crucial.

On the whole, developments in this third area are thus positive. European leaders might nevertheless consider introducing a formal preference for aid to areas where ESDP missions have been undertaken. They should at least consider giving the Commission greater flexibility when it comes to directing funds toward ESDP missions. Doing so seems a necessary step toward bringing ESDP closer to real autonomy.

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<sup>75</sup> In 2004 and 2005 the Commission gave some 464 million USD to the DRC according to the OECD, "European Community, Development Assistance Committee Peer Review" (2007), p. 75, available at: [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/57/6/38965119.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/57/6/38965119.pdf).



# Conclusion

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In conclusion, there are five important ways to build ESDP's future:

1. Work to build a consensus around which model ESDP will follow for the near-medium term. Building "Athena" seems the most logical step, but European leaders will have to choose whether to put precious resources into building coercive or stabilization capabilities. This will require significant political leadership. Rewriting the European Security Strategy might be one way of building consensus. The ESS as it stands is not a bad document as a general statement of European security aims. It is too broad, however, and gives far too little indication of what Europe's priorities are.
2. Focus on developing capabilities. This is not, unfortunately, a new suggestion, but it remains crucial. Building ESDP will not parallel the experience of building the European Monetary Union. Joining armies does not have the same inherent benefit for Europe as linking currencies has. Harmonizing or integrating national forces does not in itself add much value unless the funds freed up are used to increase Europe's capabilities foundation. In the end, more spending overall will probably still be necessary.
3. For the time being, at least, avoid wasting energy and political capital in establishing an EUOHQ. Although there is no reason why such an institution would necessarily threaten NATO, and U.S. concerns about it have sometimes been exaggerated, proponents of an EUOHQ must recognize that it smacks of anti-Americanism and would give enemies of ESDP in Washington – and London for that matter – an easy target. There is furthermore no pressing need for an OHQ at present. A better option is to continue to improve the national framework resources for autonomous operations.
4. "Fix" Berlin Plus. However legitimate their grievances with the European Union or each other, it is unacceptable that the Turkey-Cyprus-Malta problem be allowed to hold the EU and NATO hostage. Achieving this deal will probably require enlarging the context of negotiations beyond ESDP and perhaps beyond Europe.

5. Continue efforts to involve the Commission in ESDP, both to improve European capabilities and to strengthen ESDP operations.

If ESDP is to develop to its full potential it will require dedicated support from European governments, especially where it comes to taking the difficult steps necessary to improve European capabilities. There is clearly a need for sustained, constructive, high level, intra-European and transatlantic political attention. The burden will be on Europe and not the United States to ensure this is the case.

Positive political attention on both sides of the Atlantic will ultimately be the child of success. The more successful overseas missions that are undertaken under ESDP, the easier it may be to invest the necessary resources in the product. This fact explains, in part, the risk-aversion of most ESDP missions so far. Nevertheless, there is a downside to risk-aversion. If a crisis develops that clearly calls for a joint European response, and Europe has still not moved far enough down the path to real autonomy, it will be in the same position it was in the 1990s – unable to respond without dependence on the United States. Such a crisis could come in the form of a return to violence in the Balkans, or the need for a military intervention in a neighboring region, such as North Africa where the United States is not interested in participating. If such a crisis developed and the EU failed to respond effectively, ESDP could be critically wounded. On the whole, the EU will be better off undertaking more challenging missions on its own terms than on terms that are dictated for it.

Europe should thus consider undertaking more ambitious operations, using NATO or U.S. assets if need be. Technical independence may be desirable but it is less important that the ability to take the lead of a major crisis, even if that lead requires leaning on NATO. This need not mean undertaking advanced expeditionary warfare. A well-run independent stabilization mission that has staying power needed for success would do a great deal to bolster the public image of ESDP on both sides of the Atlantic. The Atlantic Alliance would be stronger for it, as would the broader transatlantic relationship.

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